

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** March 19, 2015

**Meeting No.:** 201

**Project:** 300 E. Pratt Street

**Phase:** Continued Schematic

**Location:** Inner Harbor, E. Pratt, South, Commerce and Lombard Streets

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**PRESENTATION:**

1. Mike Nicolaus, AIA, Senior Vice President and Greg Luongo, AIA, Vice President of HKS Architects, and Mark Gionet of LSG Landscape Architects re-introduced the project parameters, goals, context and site analysis. Mr. Nicolaus noted that the project had evolved substantially since the initial Concept Review on December 11, 2014.
2. The design team presented an evolution of the project in response to UDARP comments from the initial review meeting. Explorations included:
  - a. Alternate massing studies and programming
    - i. Original Concept – Residential bar stacked on parking, retail and hotel
    - ii. Two Tower Scheme – Despite improved massing for some items, fell short on other criteria
    - iii. Tower Shift – Optimized views, visibility and compact residential floor plate on top of hotel bar
    - iv. Reconfigured Hotel – Stacks under residential tower, lines garage, and improves E. Pratt St. urban presence
    - v. Retail Shift under Tower – Provides opportunity to negotiate flood plain regulations
    - vi. Carve Residential Tower – Begins to establish some hierarchy and clarity, as well as more site responsive
    - vii. Articulated Tower and Base – Optimized views, creates distinctive skyline profile, articulates retail base in response to site context and grade conditions, and addresses Lombard Street corners, expresses amenities and sky gardens, and clarifies program articulation
  - b. Site and Urban Design
    - i. Existing Conditions
      1. Key part of the Inner Harbor
      2. Extreme vehicular traffic creates an island
      3. Relationship to established icons, e.g. the Aquarium
      4. Pedestrian access on the north side of E. Pratt Street
    - ii. Inspirations
      1. The water
      2. Wetlands – natural and with human intervention
      3. Man-made shoreline
    - iii. Design Exploration
      1. Grade transitions caused by flood plain regulations and accessibility requirements
        - a. More organic, less formal geometry along E. Pratt Street promenade
        - b. Sculpted stairs, landings and plantings along E. Pratt Street to retail

- c. Ramping along E. Pratt Street to retail
- 2. Other interactions with both pedestrian and vehicular access
  - a. Continuation of the pedestrian way along E. Pratt Street
  - b. Vehicular access to parking and hotel
  - c. Pedestrian access to hotel

**COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:**

1. The panel was generally complimentary of the updates proposed by the architect, and of the decision to engage an equally qualified and recognized landscape architect for the project.
2. Specific comments included:
  - a. Massing studies and programming
    - i. The panel applauds the selected scheme for clarity and iconic possibilities, particularly at the harbor view facing E. Pratt Street
    - ii. The panel asked the team to consider the following:
      1. Additional study and development to activate the Lombard Street corners; consider activating the Lombard Street façade with artful graphics and/or banners
      2. Cover the top of the parking deck to provide a landscaped terrace, or green roof, or combination of screening to the parked vehicles
      3. Consider making the top of the retail base accessible and green as noted in 2. above
      4. Attempt to engage the hotel with E. Pratt Street with an access portal
      5. Since the residential tower is the primary use, consider providing a primary entry from E. Pratt Street
      6. Re-evaluate the retail base, especial at the western corner, and consider making it more receptive to pedestrian access
      7. Engage the tower with the ground rather than allowing it to be masked by the retail base. Currently, only the southwest corner of the upper mass is legible, allowing a secondary mass to be grounded
      8. Can the garage elevators be moved from the west façade? If not, then the architectural expression on the west façade becomes critically important
  - b. Site and Urban Design
    - i. E. Pratt Street landscape/urban design is both inventive for Baltimore, appropriate, and effective while addressing the flood plain regulations. The panel particularly appreciated the challenge to formal landscaping and streetscape
    - ii. The panel asked the team to consider the following:
      1. Consider adding a secondary, informal line of trees along the lower level of the E. Pratt Street promenade/within the steps
      2. Consider adding additional planting along the promontories that are integrated into the steps
      3. Provide adequate emphasis and space for the intermediate ramp landing
      4. As the design develops, decrease the rise on the stairs if possible – emphasize ascending versus climbing
      5. Carefully consider the horticulture to emphasize native plantings
      6. Can the steps to the hotel and residential lobbies convey a more heroic character?

**PANEL ACTION:**

The panel indicated that the general directions on massing and streetscape/urban design are progressing nicely and that the team should further advance the Schematic Design Phase with consideration of the comments.

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**Attending:**

Gaylord Dutton – BDC  
Michael Fisher – Site Resources, Inc.  
Michael Nicolaus, Greg Luongo, Henry Hill – HKS  
Caroline Hecker – RMG  
Larry Bergner, John Camera, Phil London – Comstock  
John d’Epagnier – RKK  
Chris Dillon – UB  
Kevin Litten – BBJ  
Mark Gionet – LSG

UDARP Panel Members - Dr. Judith Meany, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns, David Haresign\*, and David Rubin

Planning Department- Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Theo Ngongang, Wolde Ararsa, Heather Martin, Caitlin Audette, Alex Hoffman, Eric Tiso, Kristin Baja, Laurie Feinberg